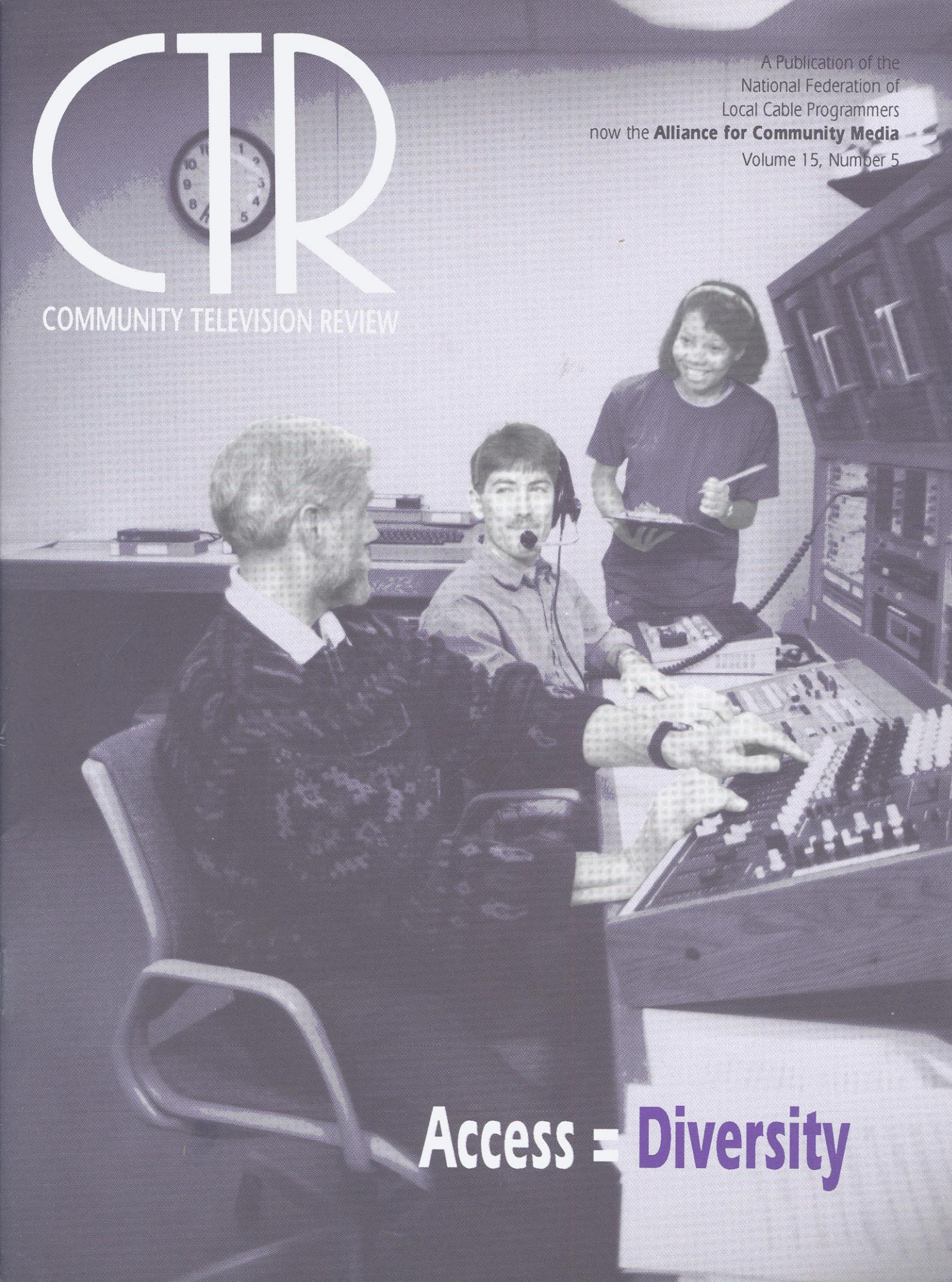


CTR

COMMUNITY TELEVISION REVIEW

A Publication of the
National Federation of
Local Cable Programmers
now the **Alliance for Community Media**
Volume 15, Number 5



Access = Diversity

Unattended Videotape Playback

LEIGHTRONIX Event Controllers provide unattended program playback for your community access, educational and government cable channels.

PRO-16

The all in one playback controller

■ Control for 16 VCRs ■ Internal 16 x 4 routing switcher ■ \$4995.00

TCD-RT

Ideal for expanding systems

■ Control for 64 VCRs ■ Control for external routers ■ \$2995.00

MINI-T-IR

The low cost solution for automated playback

■ Control for 4 VCRs ■ Internal 5 x 1 switcher ■ \$695.00

C-VOICE Telephone Remote Control

Telephone remote control for your playback equipment

May be used in conjunction with TCD-RT and PRO-16 control systems ■ \$1195.00

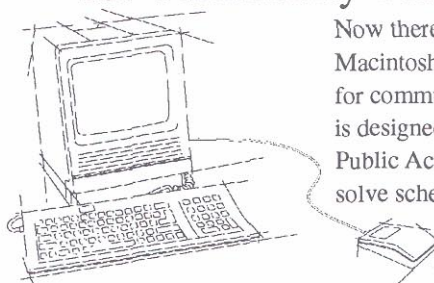
For more information, call or write

LEIGHTRONIX, INC.

2330 Jarco Drive, Holt, MI 48842 ■ (517) 694-5589 ■ FAX (517) 694-4155

Scheduling Software

for Community Television



Now there is easy to use Macintosh database software for community television. It is designed by an experienced Public Access manager to solve scheduling hassles.

CableCast schedules programs.

Using simple click commands you can quickly make publication schedules and playback logs.



CableCast 3.26



FastSchedule

FastSchedule reserves production equipment. Set up easy calendars for 10 cameras or a 100! It keeps track of shows in progress and reports on producers activities.

Call Roberta Delegard at (612) 220-3084 or write
Will Loew-Blosser, 3948 12th Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

WANTED! PRODUCERS FOR



Volunteers are wanted to produce segments for this national award winning show.

This video magazine features the stories and successes of people with developmental challenges such as mental retardation cerebral palsy and autism.

For more information call or write:

"GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES..."

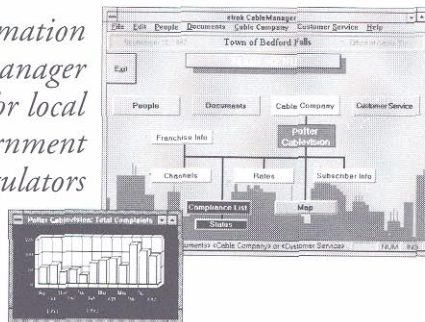
ATTENTION MAGGIE LEE
4801 WEST PETERSON AVE SUITE 500
CHICAGO, IL 60646
(312) 282-2207

Winner of National Education Film and Video Festival Silver Apple
ACE Award Nominee
Intercom Video Festival Gold Plaque Award

LITTLE CITY FOUNDATION

CableManager™ for Windows™

*The information
manager
for local
government
cable regulators*



Quickly and easily process and analyze subscriber complaints, track franchise compliance and much, much more. Includes the new *Cable Act of 1992* in a unique hypertext format. There's nothing else like it.

Requires IBM PC or compatible running Microsoft Windows 3.1.
Single cable system version is \$495 plus \$10 shipping and handling.
Full working demo just \$10. Satisfaction guaranteed.

etrok

Microsoft®
Windows™
Compatible

1550 North Fuller Avenue
Suite 305
Los Angeles, CA 90046

213 876-8169

CTR

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1992
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 5

CTR EDITORIAL BOARD

Dirk Koning, CHAIR

Paula Manley, INFORMATION SERVICES CHAIR
Larry Beer, Lynn Carillo, Bob Devine,
Heidi Mau, Vel Wiley

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF THIS ISSUE

Lynn Carillo-Cruz, Paula Manley

MANAGING EDITOR

Tim Goodwin

OPERATIONS

Sue Fitzgerald, John Haafke

NFLCP NATIONAL OFFICE

T. Andrew Lewis, Executive Director
Shirley A. Carter, Office Manager

NFLCP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrew Blau, CHAIRPERSON
Fernando Moreno, VICE CHAIRPERSON
Kari Peterson, SECRETARY
Carl Kucharski, TREASURER

Fiona Boneham, Pamela Brown, Alan Bushong,
Brian Girtman, Karen Helmerson, James Horwood,
Paula Manley, Sharon Mooney, Julie Omelchuck,
Gerry Paulsen, Penelope Place, Anthony Riddle,
Maria Rocha, Mark Sindler, Greg Vawter,
David Vogel, LaMonte Ward, Rika Welsh.

Community Television Review is published bi-monthly by the Alliance for Community Media, Inc (formerly the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers) Subscriptions \$15 a year for six issues. Send subscriptions, memberships, address changes and inquiries to the Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542. Phone 202/393-2650 • Fax 202/393-2653.

Address editorial and advertising inquiries to *Community Television Review*, 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113. Phone 616/454-6663 • Fax 616/454-6698.

Bulk orders for additional copies considered individually. Contact the national office for information on rates and delivery.

© 1992 by the Alliance for Community Media, Inc. (formerly the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers). Prior written permission of the Alliance for Community Media required for all reprints or usage.

Produced through the studios of City Media, Inc.



In this Issue

- 2 Public Policy Update, Alan Bushong**
In search of a communications policy
- 3 Connections**
Hometown Judging, Media Arts SIG, Membership Dues, World AIDS Day, 1993 Convention, Accessing the Alliance
- 4 International Update, Karen Helmerson**
Profile: PACT
- 5 About This Issue, Lynn Carillo-Cruz & Paula Manley**
- 5 Video Kudzu: Is There a Cure? George Stoney**
- 7 In Defense of the Lunatic Fringe, Anthony Riddle**
- 8 IMRE Facilitates Cross-Cultural Exchange, Karen Ranucci**
- 9 HaitiVision: A Bridge Within the Community, Franklin Dalember**
- 10 Not Channel Zero - the revolution, televised, the Media Wilder**
- 11 Seniors Using Public Access Counter Stereotypes, Tom Taylor**
- 12 Freedom of Expression, Cultural Equity and Media Access, Julian Low**
- 14 Utilizing the Media: the SouthWest Organizing Project, Sofia Martinez**
- 15 Regional Organ Bank Access Program Saves Lives, Barbara Popovic**
- 16 Project VITAL and Project RAISE Meet in Tucson, Cindy Meier, et al**

On the cover: Community access crew in the control room at Tualatin Valley Community Access. Photo by Mitch Tlustos.

Diversity Defined

Diversity seems to be the new warm and fuzzy catch word of the decade. We celebrate it. We manage it. We accept it. We do not oppose it. We applaud it. We strive for it. We know that diversity of voices, content and viewpoint is critical. We believe that the former leads to the latter two. We should know that it is not enough to welcome what comes; one must actively seek all that exists. Diversity demands speech in support of the first amendment, but just as importantly, insists on speech opposed to those freedoms.

But what is it?

Diversity is hatred. It is empathy. It is caring. It is the ACLU, the NCTA, the AF of L, Ross Perot, Motown, the Scouts, the W.A.R., the JDL, Jesse Helms, NARAL, George Bush, Kriss Kross, ATT, *Wayne's World*, Sister Souljah, the PTA, Pat Buchanan, Sinead O'Connor, Randall Terry, the NEA, Bill Clinton, Lee Iococca, the Nation of Islam, RBOCs, *Drive By Agony*, Jesse Jackson, Greenpeace, the NRA; it is the cruel falsehood of a discovery and it is the reality of an errant, violent voyage and millions of indigenous peoples. For many it is extolling the virtues of the flag and other material symbols of a nation; for others it is the exercise for the fundamental but controversial rights central to a democracy.

It is all of that and all of us and then some.

True diversity is conflicted and uncomfortable. And it is the fragmented but collective strength that is the essence of democracy. Now that we have defined diversity so precisely, please explore it with us in this issue.



—T. Andrew Lewis, Executive Director

Public Policy Update

by Alan Bushong, Public Policy Committee Chair

In Search of a Public Interest-Driven National Communications Policy

Cable Re-regulation Bill Means Well but Misses the Mark. Driven by pressures to make cable rates more affordable, the cable television re-regulation bill was enacted October 5, 1992 as Congress overwhelmingly overrode President Bush's veto. The Senate voted the same 74-25 margin by which it passed the bill; the House override vote of 308-114 was a significant increase from the 280-128 passage of the bill. The bill goes into effect December 4, 1992.

This column repeats information sent to Alliance for Community Media (formerly NFLCP) members recently and places the current problem legislation in the context of a larger problem: a vacuum in national communications policy and lack of public interest considerations.

Cable Re-regulation. Of greatest importance to Alliance members is the inclusion of an amendment added to the Senate version of the bill by Senator Wyche Fowler of Georgia after Senate committee work, with no chance for discussion. This provision, now in Section 10(c), titled *Children's Protection from Indecent Programming on Leased Access Channels*, reads:

Within 180 days following the enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to enable a cable operator of a cable system to prohibit the use, on such system, of any channel capacity of any public, educational or governmental access facility for any programming which contains obscene material, sexually explicit conduct, or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct.

Potentially more damaging is the conforming amendment modifying Section 638 of the Cable Act, which exempted cable operators from liability for the content of PEG programming. The new language burdens the operator with liability for PEG programming that "involves obscene material." These sections can be expected to have a chilling effect on access channels.

Throughout the development of the House bill and conference committee work, the Alliance contacted Congressional leaders and received assurances that the amendment would not stand. Although the House version did not include it, the conference committee retained the Senate language, which is now law.

Alliance interpretation. With removal of the liability exemption, cable operators can be expected to prescreen and potentially pull "questionable" programs. Live programming may also be subject to new restrictions. Community television organizations could be subject to the same liability as cable operators. The prohibition on material "soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct" could be interpreted very broadly to include gay and lesbian programming, or discussion of civil disobedience, for example. However, by pulling a program mistakenly, the cable operator or access organiza-

Don't Touch That Dial, or That Tape, or That Live Show

As a PEG access channel staring down the double barrels of sections 10(c) and 10(d) of the Cable Television Consumer Protection Act of 1992, whadda' ya' gonna do? Section 10(c) of course is the section referring to, "...programming which contains obscene material, sexually explicit conduct, or material soliciting or promoting unlawful conduct." (See Public Policy Update this page). Section 10(d) adds a "conforming" amendment modifying existing Section 638 of the Communications Act of 1934 (which had exempted cable operators from liability for the content of programming on PEG channels) to eliminate such exemption for PEG programming that "involves obscene material." The Cable Operator may be liable and may be able to establish programming guidelines.

No one is sure of the "start" date of Section 10(d), but Section 10(c) won't take effect until after the FCC promulgates rules (within six months of October 5, 1992). The Alliance believes that the two sections violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution on their face, and that there are no regulations that the FCC can promulgate that will pass constitutional muster. The Alliance will file comments with the FCC as will the Alliance for Communications Democracy among others.

So what do you do today? Don't do anything differently! The only hint of potential liability occurs if 10(d), the "conforming" amendment, takes effect on December 4 and you currently indemnify the cable operator against programming claims and something airs that is ultimately determined in court to be obscene. But if you attempt to "make the call" on some show now, you face legal recourse from the programmer regarding prior censorship. Damned if you do, damned if you don't, dammit!

If any attempts are made by overly zealous operators, cities or programming boards to invoke either 10(c) or (d) prior to FCC rules being promulgated, write or call the national office immediately.

In the November 2 issue of Multichannel News, T. Andrew Lewis is quoted regarding the above mentioned sections saying they are, "just blatantly unconstitutional." He said there's no way they can be implemented without requiring the operator to pre-screen programming, which would involve prior restraint.

tion exposes itself to liability from the programmer for wrongly restricting speech.

The next step. The Alliance is taking five action steps in response to this legislation:

1. Provide guidelines for Alliance member interaction with cable companies and franchising authorities in relation to censorship.
2. Build or extend existing coalitions with other public interest-driven communications groups.
3. Respond to FCC rulemaking processes required by the new law.
4. Identify for court challenge portions of the law which violate the First Amendment.
5. Raise funds to allow the greatest possible challenge.

Prior to Senate passage, the Alliance began working with groups including the Alliance for Communications Democracy, the ACLU and the People for the American Way to eliminate the damaging section.

The Alliance position on Section 10(c) and the conforming amendment: expensive, unnecessary and unconstitutional. In a letter issued to Senators prior to the final vote on the bill, the Alliance summarized three points:

1. The cost to prescreen 15,000 hours a week will undoubtedly be added to cable subscriber bills, putting this amendment at direct cross purposes with the stated intent of the bill to provide affordable cable. In addition, involving cable operators in content liability for, and censorship of PEG access programs, destroys the editorial independence Congress created for these channels in 1984.

2. Most community television programs are created by dedicated community volunteers working with little involvement of cable company staff and with little cost, Section 10(c) literally undoes this volunteer work by adding unnecessary staff costs.

3. Provisions of Section 10(c) appear unconstitutional on their face, and are clearly unnecessary. Current laws and guidelines have worked well for 20 years. There simply is no problem here, and if the system isn't broken...

1992 election year politics: a bad Twilight Zone episode. Election-year politics have wreaked havoc in Washington. Regarding cable legislation, nearly everyone wanted to be perceived as pro-consumer rather than as favoring obscenity or unlawful conduct. As Alliance members, we know the problems with these restrictions, but House and Senate members were counting the 50,000,000 plus cable subscribers and vocal "morality" watchdogs in a difficult election year.

Alliance actions after Senate/House conference committee work. When the conference committee retained the amendment and sent the bill forward, further amendment was impossible. Conference committee bills must be voted up or down, as they read. The Alliance had to choose between two less than desirable alternatives: oppose the entire bill, align with the NCTA and Motion Picture Association, alienate practically every group with which the Alliance wants to form coalitions, take a stance painted as anti-con-

Continued on page 4

1993 Hometown Video Judging Sites Sought

Plans are underway for the 1993 Hometown Video Festival. If your access or local origination facility is interested in participating as a Preliminary Judging Site, please send a letter indicating your interest to Randy VanDalsen, Hometown festival manager, at The Buske Group, 2015 J Street, Suite 28, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Each Preliminary Judging Site oversees the judging of 60-80 tapes entered in the competition. Each site determines the four finalists in from one to four categories, depending on the number of videotapes entered in a given category. Preliminary Judging Sites must be able to judge entries in either the VHS or 3/4" format. The preliminary judging activities must occur during the last half of April 1993. About 30-35 Preliminary Judging Sites will be selected.

The Alliance is also seeking letters of interest from facilities willing to host the final judging activities, where the winners are chosen in this annual competition. Facilities which have previously served as Preliminary Judging Sites and wish to be considered as a host site for final judging should send a letter to the Hometown festival manager at the address shown above. The Final Judging Site must have at least ten (10) viewing areas, to be set up for judging VHS or 3/4" entries. These viewing areas must be available for three consecutive days (Saturday through Monday) to accommodate the final judging process. Final judging will take place in mid-May 1993.

A universal reaction of centers which have served as Hometown Judging sites is that this activity generates great ideas for programs and production techniques for their staff and community producers.

The deadline for letters of interest in participating as a preliminary or final judging site is December 15, 1992.

Media Arts SIG Formed

An informal meeting held during the national convention in St. Paul, has led to development of a new Special Interest Group, "Media Arts and Cable Access."

Participants at the meeting identified a variety of issues that such a SIG might address, including collaborations between media arts

CONNECTIONS

It's Official!

We're the Alliance for Community Media

The Alliance for Community Media is now officially the name of our organization as determined by delegates to the 1992 National Convention. The new name is broad enough to encompass any media tools and delivery systems with the potential to help accomplish our purpose: community communication.

The following style considerations should guide usage of the new name:

- Use the full name, *Alliance for Community Media*, first in any written or oral communication;
- Shorten the name to *Alliance* (not ACM) for subsequent uses;
- Follow the *Alliance for Community Media* with *formerly NFLCP* the first time the name is used in any written or oral communication.

and access centers, media literacy, intermediate and advanced video training, new sources of funding, an ongoing media arts track at future Alliance conventions, cross representation on the regional and national boards of media arts and access organizations, and joint conferences.

To become an official Alliance SIG, at least 20 members must sign a petition stating the name and purpose of the group.

For more information, call Mark J. Sinder at (504) 529-3366 or write to him at Cultural Communications, PO Box 30498, New Orleans, LA 70190.

Membership Dues and Billing Cycle Change

A new dues structure for all members, and a new billing system for organizational members are now in place for the Alliance for Community Media (formerly the NFLCP).

In the past, the Alliance used a membership billing system that operated with 12 separate member anniversary dates - each organization paid its annual dues in the same month as when the organization first joined.

The new system, effective in October 1992, began a transition process of moving all organizational members to the same annual dues cycle with an anniversary date of September 1. By September 1993 all organizational members' annual billing cycles will run from September 1 through August 31.

This change will increase opportunities to communicate with

member organizations about dues issues and will create a more efficient billing cycle allowing staff more time to devote to member services and new member recruitment.

New membership dues and categories were approved by the delegates to the 1992 Annual Meeting in St. Paul. The dues increases range from no increase up to \$100 for organizational members and from no increase to up to \$20 for individual members. The delegates believed the new dues structure was necessary to improve the financial health of the organization and therefore enhance its ability to serve and represent its members. Dues have not been increased since 1989.

Letters will be sent in early November to all organizational members to inform them of the changes and the transition process. In addition, over the upcoming year, members' bills will include specific information on the new dues structure and billing procedure and how both affect that particular member.

If you have any questions, please contact the national office at (202) 393-2650.

Deep Dish TV in Tribute on World AIDS Day

Deep Dish TV is presenting *We Interrupt This Program...* a live television event Tuesday, December 1 for World AIDS Day/Day Without Art 1992, produced by Creative Time and the Media Center at the Borough of Manhattan Community College for the

Deep Dish TV Network.

Charles Atlas will direct performance artists such as Ron Vawter and Diamanda Galas as they create challenging testaments to people living with AIDS, and honor those who have died. Combining confrontation, commentary, and personal narration in a call for AIDS action and awareness, *We Interrupt This Program...* creates a national forum providing essential AIDS information and cutting-edge art.

We Interrupt This Program... will be transmitted on SATCOM F4, Tr. 20, on December 1 from 9:00 - 10:00 pm (EST). If you or other stations you know of are interested in being live downlink sites for this special, please contact Deep Dish TV at 212-473-8933. Join Us!

Atlanta Convention '93 Cultural Diversity: Weaving Common Threads

"Cultural Diversity: Weaving Common Threads" is the theme for the 1993 National Convention, July 21-25, 1993. The rich and varied ethnic heritage of Atlanta will provide the backdrop for this important annual event. As our community becomes more multicultural, it is critical that we understand the role access centers play as vehicles for expressing diversity. Next year's convention will stress the importance of each voice as a "thread" in the social tapestry.

The Southeast Region welcomes the opportunity to serve as host for this international gathering of those committed to community programming. Working together, we will make next year's convention the best one ever. For more information, contact National Convention Planning Committee Chair David Vogel at (615) 521-7475 or Local Convention Planning Committee Chair Chris Leonard at (404) 873-6712.

Accessing the Alliance

Jobline. For access jobs across America, or to post job openings, call (202) 393-2653.

Bulletin Board. To connect, call (217) 359-9118, and set your computer's modem to 300, 1200 or 2400 baud, 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity.

National Office. Call (202) 393-2650, FAX (202) 393-2653, or write 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20038-4542.

International Update

By Karen Helmersen, International Committee Chair

Profile: PACT

"PACT (Private Agencies Collaborating Together) is an international federation of non-governmental agencies committed to helping low-income persons improve their social and economic conditions. It achieves this by strengthening the voluntary sector and creating alliances among diverse groups dedicated to grassroots change."

International Update profiles one of PACT's recent projects with "the international community, U.S. media and educators". The International Committee was introduced to PACT through this and looks forward to possible future collaborations focusing on community media in Central and South America. The following excerpts an article written by Chris Srinivasan, senior consultant for the Communications De-

velopment Service (CDS) at PACT in New York.

"On January 30, 1992, the Communications Development Service (CDS) of PACT brought together 45 diverse professionals from educational and public access television; the UN System and U.S. private voluntary agencies; school systems and universities; foundations; and satellite services. Their common purpose was to share knowledge and propose ways for video and other communications media to break through the isolation buffer forming around the United States and reach specific user groups – educators, students, professional groups, and local communities – with perspectives on global interdependence. Presented below are some of the highlights.

Two Approaches to a Complex Topic. Joseph Sprunger (Lutheran World Relief) and Elaine Edgcomb (consultant SEEP, CDS) moderated the symposium, which featured two panel and roundtable discussions that examined the issue from different angles.

In the first session, on *The Message and the*

User, participants looked at what messages or perspectives they were trying to communicate, and to which specific user groups in the United States.

In the second session, on *The Media and the User*, they examined how one can make best use of specific media in order to reach those target user groups.

Shaping Video-Based Approaches. The panelists and moderators explored how to integrate video with other communications vehicles – technologies and methodologies – to mobilize students, educators, professionals, and community activists to concretely work with and share a stake in the global issues of our day. With other participants, the media and education specialists drew upon the rich diversity of media approaches that make it possible to achieve this.

Some of the approaches suggested were:

- To put video and complementary tools (such as open-ended stories and other participatory activities) for engaging students into the hands of the educators, and to do all research and development in consultation with them;

- To use educational TV as a classroom and homework tool, by repackaging existing videos with new material in a more student-friendly format and by adding study guides;

- To use public access television to build community consensus about global issues, and to cultivate international exchange through local citizens – the ultimate participatory process in which the user becomes the producer.

Beginnings of a Consensus. As co-moderator Elaine Edgcomb summed it up, the participants at the Symposium agreed that people working with media must:

- Build from the base that we are a multicultural community in the U.S. as well as globally;

- Engage the target user groups in product development, respond to their needs, and evaluate our efforts for their impact and action;

- Use methods that prompt people to think more deeply about the issues, methods such as the open-ended problem solving stories;

- Use people-to-people means to build empathy and identification;

- Be aware of how rapidly the technology has changed to put more control in the hands of the viewer or listener.

However, the choices that cable, satellites, and the remote control open up have a cultural impact on us all, whether we avail ourselves of such technologies or not.

So while the medium may still be the message, today relevance to the user may be the only way to get the message across.

For more information on PACT, contact Lorraine Moneyppenny, Communications Coordinator, PACT, Communications, Media and Technical Services, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017. Telephone 212-697-6222. Fax 212-692-9748.

Karen Helmersen is Director of Finance at Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Phone 212/673-9361.

Public Policy Update

Continued from page 3

sumer, and "mortgage" our future on one vote; or criticize the damaging parts but withhold active opposition of the bill. Given the questionable short-term effectiveness and the certain long-term damage of the first strategy, the Alliance took the second option.

A brief summary of the rest of the bill and the small silver lining in the dark cloud. The FCC will oversee rate increases on basic cable for about 95% of cable systems, will set minimum signal quality standards, and can receive customer complaints about unreasonable rates on service above basic. "Retransmission consent" allows broadcasters to negotiate with, and potentially charge cable systems for signal use.

Throughout its history, the Alliance has championed affordable rates. However, the role of the FCC in local regulation must be questioned. Given the deregulation bent of the last 12 years, the size of the job versus the size of the FCC staff, and the massive amount of work surrounding franchise renewal requests alone, the only workable answer is local regulation responsive to local needs. FCC senior staff have said the new regulatory burden would "cripple" the agency, which may have to handle certification of the majority of 20,000 franchising authorities in one month. In addition, prescreening costs associated with Section 10(c) and fees to carry broadcast networks may significantly reduce savings to subscribers.

Regarding PEG access, most of the news is negative. The FCC can determine the formulas for determining PEG access costs, and these costs, including prescreening, may be itemized on subscribers' bills. The bill also allows cable operator use of unused PEG access channels for not only PBS channels but low power television channels.

While each of these options is currently available, the extra attention provided by this legislation may increase the practices.

On the positive side, PEG channels must be carried on the basic, rate-regulated tier along with local broadcasters. Another potential benefit is the section on multiple franchises, in which franchising authorities may require adequate PEG access channel capacity, facilities and financial support.

A National Communications Policy Vacuum. The inconsistencies and unconstitutional provisions within this cable bill point once again to a vacuum in national communications policy. How can a bill promoting affordable rates include an unconstitutional provision which will drive up rates? How can a bill undo the intent of the 1984 Congress to create channels in which editorial control is in the hands of the populace? How can the FCC be creating a radically different policy through video dial tone? The right hand has lost track of the left hand.

As is generally the case, a policy vacuum is in reality an unwritten policy dominated by powerful and wealthy corporate interests. The unwritten communications policy is spoken most loudly in the FCC's proposed video dial tone policy, in which corporate communications are certain to dominate and perhaps monopolize telecommunications.

Toward a True Public Interest Communications Policy. A public interest-driven communications policy will be based on meeting the communications needs of all the people. The information highway will be available for all to send and receive information, regardless of the technology or transmission device. The first portion of the highway will be reserved to serve the public interest.

Alan Bushong is Executive Director of Capital Community Television, 585 Liberty St., Salem, OR 973-8-2342. Phone 503/588-2288.

Video Kudzu: Is There a Cure?

By George Stoney

How much of what is cablecast on the access channels around the country could be described metaphorically as "video kudzu?" This question confronts me as a newly appointed board member of Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN), the recently established nonprofit entity responsible for the use of access channels in my borough, following twenty years of administration by the cable companies.

Our inheritance at MNN is over 580 weekly series, many with long-held time slots, that fill four channels almost to capacity 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To cablecast this mass of material we have been forced to spend some \$300,000 for automated, computer-driven equipment. Marvelously efficient though this system is, it still requires five full time staff members to service the schedule and the producers.

Now a very large number of these programs are by nature and intent entrepreneurial, the kind of low budget profit-oriented productions that were envisioned when Manhattan's original franchise called for "leased access" channels. As usual, Manhattan is where one finds the extremes, from homelessness and AIDS to fads and fashions. But I've noticed that what happens in my town is very often a foreshadowing of what will happen in the rest of the country in the near future. As a frequent visitor to other access centers, I have seen a growing dominance of programs that are semi-commercial and self-promotional in nature, one having little concern for the larger community. So whatever strategies we may develop in Manhattan to deal with this matter may be instructive west of the Hudson.

Back to my kudzu metaphor: the kudzu vine was introduced into the U.S. by soil conservationists as a cure for erosion. When carefully planted, pruned and controlled it still serves this useful function, so I'm told. But as anyone knows who has traveled through the South recently, it can easily get out of hand, ultimately killing the trees and grass its importers had in mind to encourage. Regaining control is costly and time consuming, sometimes hardly worth the price of the land the vine is smothering.

Manhattan's access "kudzu jungle" was allowed to flourish because the cable operators failed to enforce their own regulations. What we've inherited then are many producers who charge guests to be on their shows: plastic surgeons, orthodontists and skin specialists swap on-camera expertise while their business address and phone numbers are held for minutes on the screen. Accountants explain why one should never write a will without their help. Investment advisors kite stocks; career counselors peddle seminars; there are fee-hungry lawyers, psychologists, geneologists, proctologists...the list seems endless.

Lest you lapse into the easy pose of the hinterland Gotham-basher be advised: such programs are coming your way. There are dozens of professional media advisors who have recently discovered public access channels and are helping their clients shape material to subvert our rules and intentions. (Please note: here I'm not thinking of the likes of the ex-candidate for President Jerry Brown or our own Elizabeth Holtzman. Frankly, I'd like to see more use made of the access channels by candidates rather than less.)

Then there are the astrologers and card readers, some with shows that seem to be "live call-ins." But when you dial the number on the screen, you are told the lines are busy, meanwhile the operator explains how much more help you might get from a private session. The "callers" prove to be set-ups, the equivalent of three card monte skills. Equally numerous are the celebrity shows that tout night spots, musical groups and aspiring "models", also with phone numbers displayed.

Struggling for space and public attention among all this smothering excess of merchandising for the world like brave young pines caught in a kudzu jungle, are a lot of programs seen on our MNN channels that are as admirable in intent and execution as anything I see on access in other parts of the country. Many fulfill the anticipations those of us had back in 1970 when we fought to establish the right to public access and found its first reality here in Manhattan.

Some nonprofit agencies, some religious groups, universities and neighborhood organizations and lots of artists of all kinds do find the funds and equipment to make programs that appear on these channels. Far more would participate it were not so expensive, for all producers must provide their own studio space and equipment. Manhattan Cable, the entity serving the southern half of the Island, never offered production facilities for access. Paragon Cable, which serves the northern half of the Island, had for some years a studio that was available on a limited basis and for a substantial charge. It was closed several months before MNN assumed responsibility for the transmission of access programs on September 28, 1992. (Both systems are now owned and operated by Time-Warner.)

MNN's own efforts to provide production assistance are largely "on hold" while we cope with the overwhelming job of simply cablecasting what we have inherited. The vast majority of the 580-odd shows now on the schedule are produced in small studios that are for hire in central

About this Issue

We know lots of anecdotes in access – those stories we relate when we are short on facts and figures. We tell them often, usually apologetically, as in "well, we've never done a survey on that, but we do know anecdotally that ..."

We don't want to apologize anymore. Although facts and figures serve their purpose, these anecdotes – the stories of real people, told by real people – form our most powerful definition of access. It was one of these anecdotes that led the way for this Access=Diversity issue of CTR:

A while back, in a certain southwestern access center, an access manager overheard an exchange between two community producers. These two women were of different races, from different age groups, with vastly different economic circumstances, from different sides of town. In the course of their conversation, one of them said to the other, "You know, I've never worked with someone like you before", to which the other replied, "well, I've never even met someone like you before!"

Modern communications technology, with its attendant corporate and government gatekeepers, often divides us into haves and have nots. Access, with its premise of bringing people together for community communication, helps build community rather than intensify our isolation.

It is gratifying to see technology which has been a barrier to many voices, become a bridge between people who might otherwise never even meet. Bit by bit, the tools of communication are working into the hands of the people. The way these tools are used always reflects the hands which hold them. The stories presented here are not about access and diversity: they demonstrate access in all its diversity.

Our premise in compiling this issue has been that access to television has value only to the extent in which it reflects the diversity of our communities and builds bridges between people. If you work for access you must work for diversity. If you work for diversity you must work for self-representation. And if you work for self-representation you will be working toward community communication and justice.

Lynn Carrillo-Cruz and Paula Manley
Co-Editors in Chief

Continued next page

Access Makes a Difference

I am Ruben Marrero, a 21 year old Puerto Rican male. I started producing youth programming at MATA when I was 15. Public access gives our community a place to say things that they ordinarily would not say. Some people can express themselves through paintings, through writing or verbally. Public access gives people the opportunity to express these ways of communication through video. Public access is important to the community because the people then have control over what they want to see. The community has control, not corporate sponsors. Public access lets us voice our opinions, frustrations and community events without being censored. For these few reasons I hold public access close to my heart and you should too.

Ruben Marrero, Milwaukee

[Access] is important to me because it has given me the opportunity as a Muslim to give to the community what we have learned from our leader Iman Warith Deen Mohammed and also our holy book the holy Koran, the knowledge of the one lord of us all...To be blessed to learn how to produce television programs from our brothers here at People TV and to pass most of that knowledge on to others.

Najee Bilal Hasan, Islamic Media & Community Producer, Atlanta

Manhattan. Three have links to the system that permit "live" programming, mostly call-ins. Recording these shows for access is often the bulk of their business. So for these studios, as for many current producers, cable access has become a source of a precarious living.

What do we do now? How are we of MNN to reclaim the channels as "vehicles for the free exchange of ideas," which is what we said they would be when we fought so hard back in 1970 to have them written into the Manhattan franchise and which continues to be our most persuasive argument in the ongoing fight to maintain the support we now depend on at the Office of Franchise and when dealing with the City Council?

To answer these questions we are forced to rethink some principles of operation that have become shibboleths in the access community. (Here, please note, I am expressing my own opinion and am not speaking for the Board or staff of MNN.)

First, I think we have to reconsider "first come, first served." Not only in Manhattan but in other places around the country it has been demonstrated that a relatively small group of producers with entrepreneurial intent can dominate the channels. While this may not now be a serious problem where there is still channel time available, it is more and more commonly found in the use of studio time, equipment and, especially, editing time. Surely we should consider adopting some approach that allows for the reservation of slots in the schedule for newcomers, for the less aggressive but more representative groups, for those who hold viewpoints not being voiced. Surely some rational means can be found to give priority in training and the allocation of facilities to those who speak to the manifest needs of our constituents.

We also need some strategies for helping viewers sort things out on our channels. Clustering programs that appeal to special segments of the public is one device that has been quite successful in some places. Back in the '70s John Smith in Aspen, Colorado, programmed a block of prime time each night of the week with a special emphasis: municipal affairs, high school matters, women's concerns, and art scene, etc. Viewer response was strong and producers found it far easier to build audiences. I hope this article will inspire others to write to CTR about their own attempts to deal with this problem.

Next, I think we need to take a pro-active approach in stimulating the use of the channels by groups and individuals who can voice the concerns of viewers that we know are not being addressed. Yes, I know, that is courting "trouble." Taking a stand always does. But the alternative is too clearly evident by now to permit a cop-out into passive objectivity.

In the near future MNN expects to be providing studio facilities. Unless we decide now about priorities, the 580+ present producers will overwhelm us. And what of new ones? In the two weeks following our on-screen announcement that we were responsible for access, more than 500 new would-be producers have applied! So when we activate two new channels next January, they are likely to bring with them quite as many problems as they solve. Some judgment calls must be made. How well we deal with this situation will be instructive for other centers around the country where similar dilemmas are, or soon will be, facing the staffs.

To ease the transition from cable company operation of access to our own nonprofit entity, MNN's Board

There is a mistaken belief widely held among cable access users and supporters that the public has "a right" to these channels as a "First Amendment instrument." Unfortunately our claim on the channels and the franchise fees that, for the most part, support our operations is as tenuous and uncertain as our relationship with City Hall. Cable franchises are not in any practical terms federally mandated or enforceable. Our existence is continually subject to the shifting fortunes and financial maneuverings of the cable operators.

decided that for the first three months all present commitments to producers for time on the channels would be unchanged. Meanwhile, all producers have signed agreements which state quite explicitly that charging money for appearances and other clearly commercial practices are forbidden. Alex Quinn, our wise coordinator with a dozen years of access center administration to draw upon, is expected to find means for enforcement. Some Board members are convinced that sweet reasonableness will prevail. I predict much stronger measures will be required, with considerable political fall-out as this vast body of producers and their customers find the rules mean what they say.

There is a mistaken belief widely held among cable access users and supporters that the public has "a right" to these channels as a "First Amendment instrument." Unfortunately our claim on the channels and the franchise fees that, for the most part, support our operations is as tenuous and uncertain as our relationship with City Hall. Cable franchises are not in any practical terms federally mandated or enforceable. Our existence is continually subject to the shifting fortunes and financial maneuverings of the cable operators. We won concessions in cable franchises because we persuaded our local governments that we were offering something that would be of benefit to the public at large. We sold ourselves on our promise of fostering "civic good." Video kudzu doesn't do much to help us hold on to our territory.

Nor is video kudzu going to be of much use in our fight to gain public access on video dial-tone and on other upcoming technologies that may make our present cable systems obsolete. Cable has been a useful rehearsal ground for the idea of access. In many places we have demonstrated that it can work with great benefit to the community. In others, like Manhattan, we've got a tough job ahead to reclaim those cherished ideals.

George Stoney is Paulette Goddard Professor in Film at New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, 721 Broadway, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10003. Telephone (212) 998-1718.

Hard Copy, Dateline Public Access: "The wild and wacky world of access where weirdos run rampant and special interest groups spread their biased opinions..."

Gimme a break! This type of drivel from the bunch a folks that bring you The Swedish Bikini Team parachuting into a group of beer-sodden campers? Handyman—a superhero with cerebral palsy who falls clumsily from windows instead of flying? George Will tutoring President Reagan from Jimmy Carter's stolen notebook one minute and sitting on the panel of debate questioners the next. The Emperor owns no clothes!

It seems to me that the true lunatic fringe has been controlling the dialogue forever—sort of a matter of the fringe wearing the jacket while the rest of us stood out in the cold.

But then again...Who is the Fringe? We are, evidently. Who are we? Access producers and programmers.

Who said so? They did. They did this to us. We were just standing here, minding our own edits and those guys with the big antennas fringed us.

Don't Fringe Yourself and I won't fringe you. But, for the purpose of this discussion, we will accept this de-nig-rating term to describe that general category of thought which intimidates the norms and expectations of popular commercial culture.

Why do we attract the Fringed? Where are they supposed to go? The train station? The Salvation Army? Get a can of spray paint and do graffiti postcards up'side the homes of the network execs. Dare we (also) sneer at the gift of a cave painter rendered in her own blood, sweat, toil and tears?

Why don't we attract the Mainstreamed? We'd be glad to give Dan Quayle an access program, but him and Dana Carvey got network connections and don't be needing us (right now).

What is the liability of being fringed and the asset of mainstream? The liability of being fringed is lack of tools, time and wide popular authority. It is the danger of hyenas nipping the fringed of the pack. The asset of being mainstream is the reassuring whisper of self-righteousness produced by the illusion of being part of a (wiser) safer majority.

What is the liability of being mainstream and the asset of being fringed? The liability of being mainstreamed is the unquestioned validity of your assumptions about reality. The asset of being fringed is freedom, creativity and exposure to conflicting ideas. Double-consciousness and heightened awareness of others.

Death to the Fringe!: Empowerment. The level of power determines what is fringe. Fringing, Centering, Mainstreaming, Marginalizing: these are measurements of power, not quality or content, for the content in fringe and mainstream may be relatively similar. These terms are measurements of distance from the centers of profit. Seen an access idea reach critical popular mass and jump right out of the margin & into the commercial mainstream? Yup.

Media Justice. People are crying out for justice. Our producers. Don't be confused. Not talking only of the people who use the media for addressing injustice in general, but also the people using the media to address the injustice of image and idea in the media itself. They don't see themselves and they want to. Narcisuss spells his name right on his baby's home movies.

We have been denied access to the game for so long, we were not allowed to participate in the writing of the rules, which, in any event, were written to further exclude us. Should we comply? Now, what was chosen as commercially viable is the model. Must we adhere to a model meant to exclude us in the first place...?

IN DEFENSE OF THE LUNATIC FRINGE

We fringe are not lunatic!

*We are steel poets in a
time of chaos. We are
patriots on the ramparts.*

*We are angels on the
outskirts of hell.*

Communication is born of a need to define and multiply the self. Process the world. DNA is a pattern, a code. Access is no different. Those who can get on ABC get on ABC. Those who can't should just shut-up and die?

Mitakwe Oyasin = We are all related. Fringe and Mainstream Be One. There is the tendency among all people to identify a mainstream and to require adherence to the concepts of a mainstream. This has powerful survival implications inherited, no doubt, from our ancestor—the wildebeast. The vulnerable fringe of the herd is protection for the middle. THEY ARE ONE. Have you seen a school of fish react as one to the flash of movement above the surface of the stream? Note that this is essentially a creation of fear. Fear of attack from without. Group behavior, group survival.

It is misguided, however, when the center, as it names itself, begins to be the threatening force to the fringe. The tall forget whose shoulders they stand on. The threat which encouraged all to be rallied around a perceived center in the first place is no longer the real threat. Sometimes the center acts on the fringed as if it were an outside invading organism. Herd instinct can promote survival, but antagonism toward the solitary thinker encourages limitation of the psychological genetic pool.

Clear proof of this behavior: tune in to any of the audience talk shows. You find that while the guests and/or subjects often represent notions not condoned by the perceived center, the overwhelming assumption of these programs is still that there is a

center, that the beliefs of the audience mark that center and that center is a better way to be. The center, as represented by the audience, is often shrill in its alarm that someone should (gasp!) choose to exercise choice.

One (Very) Serious Paragraph. The question of the fringed, then, is the question of power. Power is the question of continued existence. To be or not to be, in an intellectual, spiritual sense. Therefore, marginalization is the threat of extinction. Think on that for a long time. Danger! Ya wanna be picked off by the predator? It is a double indignity to tease as weak that which you attempt attempt to make powerless.

Reverse the Labeling Process. Why are our people labeled as the lunatic fringe? Because the concept of media freedom/justice you push undermines the media normalcy designed to sell air freshener. If you are not weakened, a new reality—your own—could become the center. Or so they fear.

"People of non-color." It kills the term "non-white". Who wants to be called either? Being offensive and patently stupid, an equivalent reversal of terms could help free our mainstream of the need to identify tendencies in terms of ourself and the other—a juvenile concept. **A \$20 gold piece to the one who coins the devastating reversal!**

In Reality....Do you know what fringe actually is? Minneapolis Television Network's program manager, our own knitting Buddha of the staff meeting, tells me that the fringe on a woven garment is actually the exposed ends of the warp—those important threads which are stretched across the loom to first support the cloth. You are looking at the exposed structural support which would otherwise be hidden in the fabric. This is beautiful, is it not?

So stand tall and scream, "We fringe are not lunatic! We are steel poets in a time of chaos. We are patriots on the ramparts. We are angels on the outskirts of hell." Lives, truly, depend on it.

Contact Anthony Riddle at Minnesota Television Network, 125 SE Main St., Minneapolis, MN 55414. Telephone 612/331-8576.

Access Makes a Difference

My name is Gladys Rogers. I am community producer, secretary, community producer, mother, community producer, board member, community producer, student, community producer. Need I say more? My affair with Access began almost eight years ago. Having a strong commitment to my community, when the opportunity presented itself to share the positive activities that take place, I immediately took it. Over the length of my involvement with community television I have had nearly unbelievable opportunities. I have met persons from all walks of life, and realize that we are all basically the same. I have covered events that I would have never known about without community television, from firefighter's conventions to a fundraiser for the Persian Gulf crisis, and many, many enlightening programs.

I have worked on bilingual programs without knowing the second language, I have worked with mobility impaired, and visually impaired, and none of these differences created any barriers. As an African-American female in today's society, to be able to work with such diverse populations is an asset in any field of endeavor. The sense of pride, the heightened self-esteem, the confidence that I have gained through community television has a value that cannot be expressed. My window to the community, that others see through, has allowed people to become comfortable with wanting to know and understand other cultures.

Gladys Rogers, Milwaukee

Latin American Videomakers Expand the Notion of "Access"

By Karen Ranucci

The information we receive about our southern neighbors is almost exclusively gathered by U.S. journalists or scholars. As a result, our ideas and opinions about Latin America are shaped by our own cultural, political, and economic perspectives. Within the historic scheme of international telecommunications, images flow from North to South.

But the revolution in small format video technology has given people who were once "voiceless" the opportunity to make their own television. The International Media Resource Exchange (IMRE) has been working since 1985 to share the exciting, innovative and authentic tapes made by independent and community-based producers in Latin American countries.

Throughout Latin America, women's organizations, labor unions, churches, human rights groups and others are using video as a tool for community organizing. Some of the most interesting video work is being done by Indians who are trying to preserve their traditions and protect their land from outside invaders.

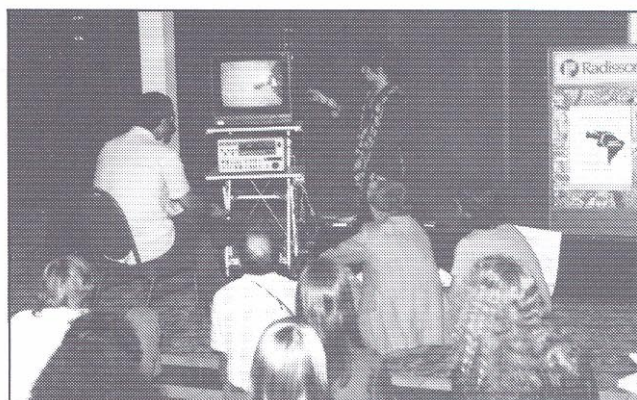
The Spirit of TV was made by the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista in Brazil, a video production group that teaches Brazilian Indian groups how to use video. *The Spirit of TV* documents the first time the Walapi Indians were introduced to TV and video. They caught on fast and responded by thinking about how they could use video. "Fill the picture up with all of us, then show it to the white men so they will think there are a lot of us." The Indians then proceeded to put on their angriest faces and spoke threateningly into the camera, warning people to stay away from their land.

The Ayamara Indians of Bolivia made a tape called *Path of Souls*. For more than 500 years the Ayamara have protected and worshiped the woven garments worn by their ancestors. These sacred textiles are believed to embody the souls of the founders of their tribe. Recently the Indians of Coroma, a small hamlet deep in the Andes, discovered that their sacred fabrics had been stolen and were being sold by an art dealer in the United States.

They turned to video in an effort to regain the stolen garments. "There is no electricity in Coroma and the people there had never seen a film or TV, but they wanted to do something to alert other Andean communities that international traffickers are stealing their ancient artifacts," explains Cristina Bubba, the Bolivian anthropologist who brought the Indians together with a group of independent video makers from La Paz.

"We worked together to write the script based on their experience. The Coromans then acted out the story. We also made the tape to show in the United States with the hope that it would help us regain the stolen textiles." It worked! A group of lawyers in the U.S. were so moved by their tape that they volunteered to prosecute the art dealer, and won.

The tapes being made by indigenous peoples are



"Democracy in Communication Latin America" Video Festival is screened at the 1992 national convention.

Throughout Latin America, women's organizations, labor unions, churches, human rights groups and others are using video as a tool for community organizing. Some of the most interesting video work is being done by Indians who are trying to preserve their traditions and protect their land from outside invaders.

unique. In most cases they are not made for export to foreign audiences but for their own communities. They speak their own languages, address their immediate concerns and document their histories. Their tapes offer an opportunity to learn about these peoples' lives and cultures from their own perspectives, not as we see them.

Over the past seven years, IMRE has dedicated itself to bringing these important works to various audiences in the United States, and is currently creating a database of information about videotapes (or films available on video) made by Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos.

In an effort to expand our research for the database, IMRE organized a video festival called "Democracy in Communication Latin America" in collaboration with the Alliance for Community Media. More than 127 tapes were received for the festival. Three panels of judges, made up of primarily Latino film/videomakers, selected 19 winners in six categories.

The winning tapes were recognized at the 1992 national convention and were received with great enthusiasm. Alliance members will show these tapes free of charge on their local public access channels. The entire series will be broadcast over the Deep Dish Satellite TV Network this spring, providing 14,000,000 potential cable subscribers and 3,000,000 home dish owners with the rare opportunity to see Latin American programming on television.

Contact Karen Ranucci c/o IMRE, 124 Washington Place, New York, NY 10014, Phone (212) 463-0108.

HaitiVision: "A Bridge Within the Community"

By Franklin Dalember,
as interviewed by Abigail Norman

Franklin Dalember is co-founder and co-producer of HaitiVision, a weekly series for the Haitian community of Somerville, Massachusetts and surrounding towns. The series is produced at Somerville Community Access Television. Abigail Norman is executive director of SCAT.

Who are you?

We are a group of about a dozen people who share the same beliefs. All of us are Haitians who came to this country in the past four to fifteen years. We believe in democracy, peace and justice. We believe in a fair society where everyone should have the right to express freely his political, social and religious views, where everyone should have the right to go to school, the right to housing and health, and where we should respect and love each other. We decided to work together in order to help other people in the community to have a better idea of what's going on in the community and in Haiti.

How do you use public access cable TV?

We started in 1989 with zero knowledge. We worked and volunteered and learned how to run the cameras and other video equipment. After we had gained some knowledge, with the help of the access center's staff, we decided to produce an ongoing series at Somerville Community Access TV (SCAT).

HaitiVision is a political, social and educational show. It's a two-hour live show every Saturday, where the audience can call in and participate in debates. We are a school of ideas. We bring our own ideas to the show and get ideas back from our viewers. We decided to produce the show because there weren't any Haitian shows, in Kreyol, in Somerville. We were the first Haitian show on SCAT. About 5,000 Haitians live in the city. Now we also send the show through an interconnect to Cambridge, and we bring copies to play in other nearby towns. This triples our audience.

Our first host was Dominique Constant, later joined by Myrlande Guillaume. Our current hosts are Yvon Lamour and Jacques-Antoine Jean. We treat different subjects and a variety of guests. We had the principal of Somerville High School at a time when tensions were breaking out between black and white students. The mayor of Somerville came at a time when there was a lot of racial tension between the Haitian community and the white communities of Somerville. We have had Haiti's General Consul in Boston, religious leaders, artists and performers, teachers and organizers. Sometimes we have a live audience. Correspondents send us videotapes from Haiti and sometimes report live by phone from Haiti during the show.

After the coup that deposed democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, we had a special show in English with Jean Geneus, the Haitian Consul, the writer Jean-Claude Martineau, and local community leaders. We invited people from the local newspapers and human rights agencies. We decided to do this in order to explain to the American people exactly what

I believe HaitiVision is a very positive factor in the community. When I go to a Haitian store, for example, I hear people talking about our show. They say they like HaitiVision because it is the only TV show in the Haitian community which is live, the only one that creates a dialogue with people, that tries to know the problems of the community and, together with the members of the community, find out the solutions. We treat the social needs of the community here, and we also treat issues of the political dictatorship in Haiti.

was going on in Haiti at that time, why the coup had occurred, and how the United States government was participating in Haitian affairs. We had questions and answers with a studio audience.

One of the most wonderful things we have done since we started is the documentary we made this past summer in collaboration with SCAT for Deep Dish TV. It was about the current situation in Haiti. This was a good opportunity for us to reach a large national audience.

What impact has the process of working in access had on your group?

First, we have gained a greater sense of responsibility from having to deliver our program. Every Saturday, we know people are waiting for us in front of their TVs. They are depending on us. Twenty or thirty people call us every Saturday during the show. That makes us proud, even if it is a completely volunteer effort. It also makes us do more work, makes us learn more, and helps us meet many different people.

What impact has your show had on the community?

I believe HaitiVision is a very positive factor in the community. When I go to a Haitian store, for example, I hear people talking about our show. They say they like HaitiVision because it is the only TV show in the Haitian community which is live, the only one that creates a dialogue with people, that tries to know the problems of the community and, together with the members of the community, find out the solutions. We treat the social needs of the community here, and we also treat issues of the political dictatorship in Haiti.

I think the show makes the community stronger. We are a bridge between the people in their homes and other leaders of the community at large.

For further information, contact Franklin Dalember at HaitiVision, c/o SCAT, 90 Union Square, Somerville MA 02143.

Access Makes a Difference

I produce a program for the United Nations Association of Southern Arizona. Public access is important to me because I believe that local citizens and groups need access to the video/cable systems serving their communities.

Dell Gay, Tucson

The Human Rights Campaign Fund is a federal lobbying group and PAC, and is the largest lesbian and gay political group in the country. Through DCTV, we produce a half hour public affairs program on important issues facing the national lesbian and gay community. Commercial broadcasting systems deny our community's access to television. Public access has made it possible for us to reach our community through this powerful medium. DCTV has provided us with the equipment and training necessary to produce a quality program. The Human Rights Campaign Fund, on behalf of lesbian and gay Americans across the country, urges support and greater funding for the valuable service of Public Access Television.

Human Rights Campaign Fund, Washington D.C.

Citizens feel more a part of the government process since our county commission meetings started playing on TV. They see us as just regular people like themselves and find it easier to approach us with their concerns and suggestions.

Commissioner Steve Larrance, Washington County, OR

Access Makes a Difference

As faceless alphabet soup corporations like NBC, CBS, ABC and CNN smother the last gasps of open and honest public debate, Ann Arbor Community Access Television stands as the best, last democratizing force available to this country's citizens.

John Martin, producer
Ann Arbor, MI

Public Access Television provides the access-ability to a marvelous medium of communicating, with an unprecedented combination of factors arriving (seemingly) simultaneously on the scene:

1) Virtual removal of all economic barriers, as great equipment is available to use at no cost...

2) Free Air Time!

3) Great attitude of technicians available to help (learn and produce)

4. Technical advancements in the industry

For any volunteer video producer such as myself, Public Access Television is an extremely viable concept ...whose time has come!

Dick Pirson, Minneapolis

Thank you for asking why access is important to me. I refer to the society in which I live as the land of the battling opposites. In regular television there is interest only in widely opposing views. I happen to hold a neutral view. Public access is the only vehicle willing to carry the rare view of neutrality. Thank you again.

Dale Leo Seguin, Milwaukee

Not Channel Zero - the revolution, televised

Not Channel Zero - the revolution, televised is a grassroots, alternative news/cultural television series broadcast on public access and PBS stations across the country. Primarily a re-educational tool, NCZ focuses on issues concerning the African American and Latino communities.

"Days in the life of . . ." (as told to—and partially experienced by—The Media Wilder)

September 9th. It is late. There is pressure. Donna Golden, Art Jones and Tom Poole have started editing "A Nation Erupts," a two-part hour-long report on the nationwide response to the Rodney King verdict. The shows, which will integrate footage from producers across the country, are to be broadcast on Deep Dish TV, a grassroots satellite network. Cynthia Lopez, Deep Dish's programming director, says that we need to be on-line by the 17th. Don't worry about it Tom tells her with a smile. It'll be done. When she leaves he turns to us and says it is late. There is pressure. He is not smiling.

September 11th. Tom says Donna and Art are laying down the first half of the show and that he's laying down the second half. He's got an idea what he wants to do but, he needs some music samples to make it all work. I tell him that's no problem and ask if he's sure that we'll be done in time. Um, yeah, don't worry about it, he says. Something about his "relax, sport" tone rankles me. I haven't seen a script because they've got an outline but it's rough and still evolving. But I believe in Tom. And I believe in the others. When you're doing work like this — with little pay and long hours on top of the little pay and long hours that you clock in at your "regular" job — all you have, in the end, is each other. Gotta' go, he says. Don't worry. Then he's out the door. You forgot the samples, I call after him. I guess I can bring them down to the Paper Tiger office later, I say to myself. I'm concerned.

September 12th. I got the tapes to Tom and he liked some of my ideas. They showed me some of the stuff they'd laid down and it looks pretty good. We all have different styles and approaches in NCZ, but essentially like-minded sensibilities. We love hip-hop and with NCZ we try to mesh the hip-hop aesthetic with grassroots journalism. So we juxtapose seemingly contrary images, sample visual and audio material from pop culture at large and try to inject some humor to make our points while chilling on the heavyhandedness. At least that's the aim, anyway. So far the response has been positive and very gratifying.

Still, the beginning of the first show seems a bit choppy. I let Tom know this and he's quiet for a bit. He asks me some questions and I try to be honest but not overly critical. We've been through this before, so we don't have to worry too much about hurting one another's feelings when we critique each other's work. In the end I know it'll make the show tighter. And that's what counts.

We — Tom, Cyrille and I — created NCZ about two and a half years ago. We met at Black Filmmaker Foundation workshops and tossed around ideas for an ideal television series. Tom — an avid fan of public access, suggested it as a great place to "practice" making

a show while awaiting funding.

The funding is starting to trickle in, but our goal has always been to produce the shows no matter what. Budget or no budget, we'd try to find someone or some institution like a Rise and Shine Productions or Downtown Community Television Center that might be able to hook us up with some editing decks. Two and a half years, nine shows later, we're still here.

Donna and Art are pulling an all-night editing session later this week, Tom says. He'll be pulling one tonight. Cyrille tells me that she's leaving town for the weekend and that I should write the grant proposal due next week if I want her to help type it. No problemo, I respond. (I almost forgot about that grant.) Can I get a lift? She's out the door before I finish my question, acting like she didn't hear me.

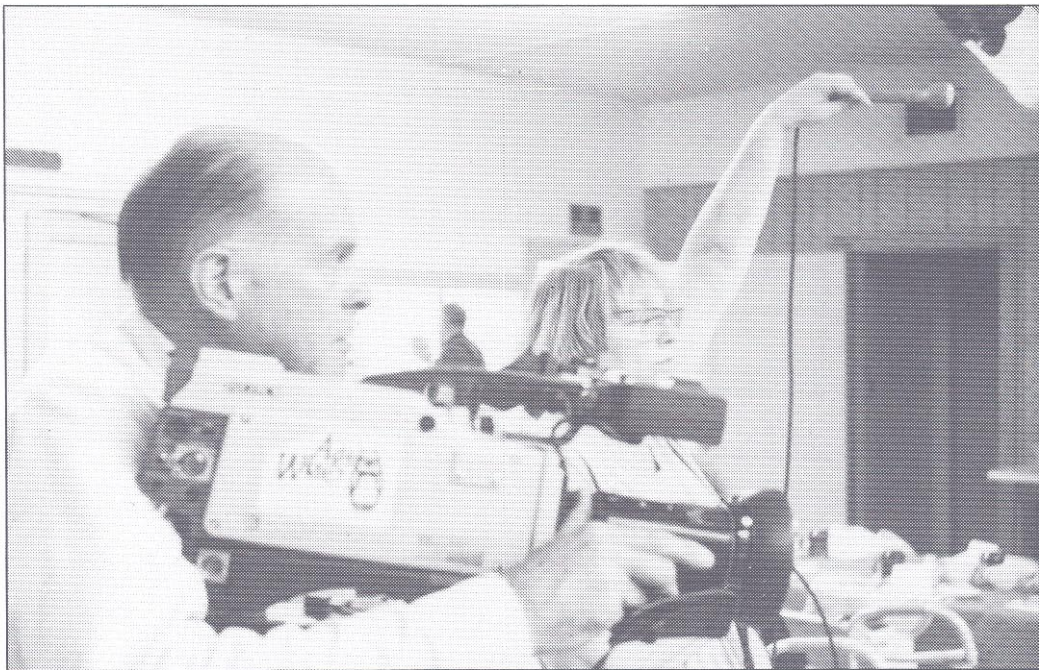
September something. The days blur. Everyone seems to be in a foul mood because it's closer to the crunch. Or maybe it's me. The shows are almost done. We've talked it through, navigated each other's creative space, stepped on a few nerves, sorted through stacks of tapes and voila (!) a collective effort has sprung forth. Tom, Donna and Art have really busted their asses. Tom went to do the titles the other day at an editing suite in some dude's house. He says they really liked the show. They were editing and getting into political discussions all night. He ended up sleeping under the editing decks. These guys, whom he had never met before, stayed up and edited into the morning. By the time he left, Tom said, they were still talking about taking over El Salvador.

Week of September 22nd. Sometime during the course of editing the second show Tom lost his job. He had been co-producing "A Nation Erupts" on his own time, but his day job is teaching video to students in an after-school program. There was some kind of miscommunication about time off, he said. I really felt for him. He works really hard and I know he really liked that gig. He said he'd land on his feet, let's finish the show. And that's what we did. Two shows, 54 minutes, no casualties. Sort of.

The programs were aired by Deep Dish to public access stations across the country and they've been getting a pretty good reaction. Cool. Cynthia really digs them and Tom's screened them to some of our friends and for the most part, people are really getting into some of the questions we're posing about the perception of truth and the existence of multiple truths, multiple realities. A sister at NYU called us and wants to set up a community screening in two weeks.

So there's not a lot of money, and not a lot of fame, but that's not, and hopefully never will be, the beats to which we bop. We likes to talk, is all. And we know that brothers and sisters have got to start talking more — creating media that engages us in active, substantive, critical discourse if we're to make any sense of a seemingly senseless world. As always, there is pressure.

Contact Not Channel Zero c/o Black Planet Productions, PO Box 805, Wakefield Station, Bronx, NY 10466, telephone (212) 926-4650, or Third World Newsreel at (212) 947-9277.



AgeWise volunteers on location in Portland, Oregon.

Seniors Using Public Access Counter Stereotypes on Aging

By Tom Taylor

If diversity in public access programming means, as I think it does, hearing *directly* from the many groups that cohabit our communities, then all groups, including seniors, need to tell their own stories.

The Senior Community Video Project, Inc. has done more than tell our stories. For over five years the group has been producing *AgeWise*, a biweekly program by seniors, on topics of interest and concern to seniors or those who aspire to that status. All members are retired, and we volunteer our time. We have demonstrated through our programming and by our very presence with cameras on location that the stereotypes that deaden and limit are UNTRUE. Our programming shows the richness and diversity of senior lives and documents the contributions seniors make to help make our community work.

AgeWise came about as an experiment, funded by the Meyer Memorial Trust, to find out if public access programming produced by volunteer seniors was a valuable activity for nonprofit service agencies, and to find if the time and resources expended by the nonprofit organization in working with volunteer access producers could be justified in light of tight budgets.

We found that public access, although not a panacea, is valuable. Value lies not only in the access showings, but in the production process ("It's not the product, but the process that's important.") and in uses of the tapes beyond the access channels.

During the last four years we have refined our purpose. The Senior Community Video Project now works to bring together retired individuals and the "new video" (public access and low cost video technology) to produce video for nonprofit, public, community service agencies and organizations.

The "new video" makes this possible. If we truly acknowledge what we preach—that access should demystify the production process—we know that video production is not all that complicated. Anyone can learn

We have demonstrated through our programming and by our very presence with cameras on location that the stereotypes that deaden and limit (seniors) are UNTRUE.

it. But more important, new developments in equipment make the production of good looking and sounding video *affordable*.

The retired cannot be set aside and "put out to pasture." There are too many of us. We are an extremely valuable resource to our communities. We have experience, we know how to do things, and we care about our communities, families, and the world. We can't be fired for what we say or question. And we have time.

When all this is put together it is obvious that senior video production should be a major element of the access mix. *AgeWise* volunteers use public access to tell what we know about and care about. We use access to raise issues and give voice to those who are left out of the public view. We use access because producing video about ourselves empowers both our crews and those in front of the camera. And we do it because there are few things in life that are as much fun as making video.

Is it worth it? It must be because we have been around for over five years paying rent and the phone. Does it have an impact? Yes. Because of *AgeWise*, Oregon's senior community knows it has a video voice. Individuals and organizations call on us to make video for them. We are looking forward to what we will do when we grow up.

Contact Tom Taylor at Senior Community Video Project, Inc. P.O. Box 29082, 4225 NE Tillamook, Portland, OR 97229-0082. Phone: (503) 282-8634.

Access Makes a Difference

I'm the producer of "Para Todos", a program about public affairs relating to Hispanic issues. Public access has given me the opportunity to meet this need in my community.

Margarita Ramirez, Tucson

We have taken advantage of the public access channels on our local cable system to air a variety of training videos for our adult volunteers. This gives them an opportunity to receive training in their own homes at their leisure, without having to go to a special training meeting.

Jill Foley, Marketing Director,
Boy Scouts of America,
Central Ohio Council 441

It's the content that's the secret attraction of these channels. The programs you'll see here are labors of love, rather than shows for dough.

--David Horowitz,
Ann Arbor News

Access at its best is a vehicle for pure communication. It's real people talking about real things. No glitz and no commercials.

Karen Haselmann,
Minneapolis

It's completely transformed my concept of television!

Jack Etsweiler, producer
Ann Arbor, MI

Access Makes a Difference

Last year, ACTV worked with dialogue and Arts Midwest in Minneapolis to present an open hearing on censorship in the arts. Members of the community presented their own experiences with censorship. We still receive calls from people requesting information from this broadcast. The local network affiliates did not cover this event. Unlike network television, ACTV programming is the community. These are important voices in our community which cannot be lost.

Anne Marie Slaughter,
Lorrie Dirkse, dialogue,
Columbus, Ohio

I am a student and a lifelong film nut. Access gives me a chance to picture my life and the life of the community around me. So much of the images and sounds on commercial TV are so calculated and committee-bred that they are completely void of life - the life of real people and the life of their communities.

John Akre, Minneapolis

...as such access is important to me and my peers as a means to get art shown...a breeding ground for arts, the popular music and entertainment industry generally don't fund or support. Access is a great way to get alternative forms of expression exposed.

Katie Moore, Alternative
Rock Musician, Atlanta

Freedom of Expression, Cultural Equity and Media Access

By Julian Low

The right to speak freely. No "right" can be as dear to people of color as this one. This basic right gives "voice" to one's thoughts, one's ideas, one's cultures and values. It is a basic right that has been denied people of color in so many ways. Denied to speak in one's defense in a court of law. Denied the right to vote. Denied the right to speak unless spoken to first. Denied the right to speak in one's own language. I recently learned from a musician friend that the hand-held drum was outlawed in the South because the mas-sabs thought it was how the slaves communicated rebellious thoughts to each other.

And, yet, freedom of expression can be a double-edged sword. While it is a right for which we (people of color) have been fighting, freedom of expression has often been used to defend racist speech, and any criticism of racist speech has been viewed as "censorship."

It is not enough that we talk about the right to freedom of speech. We need also to talk about issues of access and cultural equity. For as we all know, unless we have equal access to the methods of communication, and there is respect for cultural differences, freedom of speech is meaningless. We need to be aware of our own history and explore issues of access, equity and freedom of expression.

Let me give two case histories.

The first case exists back in the early days of cinema, when a filmmaker created a film that thrilled and captured the imaginations of its audiences. It was and still is considered revolutionary for its time. But, it sparked such a heated controversy over its images of African Americans that the filmmaker found it necessary to defend himself against the hue and cry raised by the African American community. The filmmaker chose to write, publish and distribute on his own a pamphlet entitled *The Rise and Fall of Free Speech in America*. The filmmaker was D.W. Griffith and the film was *The Birth of a Nation*.

The second case occurred in 1990, and was a controversy that rippled through the Asian American community and that managed to be front page news in the theatre world for months, and that was the *Miss Saigon* controversy. In 1990, *Miss Saigon*, a play set in Saigon before the withdrawal of U.S. troops, was a big musical about to be produced on Broadway. After a successful run in London, producer Cameron Mackintosh wished to bring the lead actor of the London production, Jonathan Price, to reprise the prime role of the Eurasian character in New York. Asian Americans in the theatre world protested the use of a white actor in yellowface, pointing out the historic use of yellowface to discriminate against Asian American actors. Actors Equity, in support of Asian American actors, denied Mackintosh permission to use Jonathan Pryce.

Cameron Mackintosh then cancelled the show, although it had already pre-sold \$25 million worth of tickets. His statement was that the cancellation "is absolutely a final decision in the light of Equity's repeated

...freedom of expression can be a double-edged sword. While it is a right for which we (people of color) have been fighting, freedom of expression has often been used to defend racist speech, and any criticism of racist speech has been viewed as "censorship."

condemnation of our artistic decision of this production." He is further quoted to have stated "The inaccurate and inflammatory statements which Equity has made concerning *Miss Saigon* have served only to create a poisonous atmosphere in which creativity and artistic freedom cannot function or survive."

I raise *Miss Saigon* not to argue the merits or demerits of this controversy. I raise it to discuss the maelstrom many of us in the Asian American and creative community found. Many of our friends and colleagues found themselves discussing the controversy with their non-Asian friends in social settings or in the workplace. And many of us found ourselves in heated arguments.

What divided us was the issue of artistic freedom on the one-side, and the historic use of white actors in yellowface that not only discriminated against Asian actors but also helped to shape the audience's view of Asian people, usually in a negative way. Many of our liberal friends who normally stood shoulder to shoulder with us now held up the banner of artistic freedom and put us in the position of censors. And coming at a time when many of us were fighting Jesse Helms and the attacks on the NEA and artistic freedom, it was confusing to say the least. The only people who seemed to understand the basis of our objections were other people of color.

What is interesting about these two cases, separated by 75 years, are their similarities. A community of color has protested an artistic creation for what it felt to be its negative impact, and the creators have raised the banner of freedom of speech in defense.

It is not enough to argue these issues through abstract phrases of right and wrong, because that is not how we live. We need to examine these issues in a historical context, because what we are experiencing are the tensions created by a First Amendment that is now guaranteed for all colliding with issues of cultural equity. We are not diverse communities coming together for the first time, on equal footing, with a clean slate and no old baggage. We are all part of a history and a culture that has been racist and we have all been touched by that racism. We need to examine and understand the impact of a racist culture and how that history has brought us to where we are today.

Our art, our perspectives, and the expression of those perspectives are not created in a vacuum, untouched by the politics and the social values of the times. We must question the images and perceptions in our own minds and question our own motivations and the motivations

...unless we have equal access to the methods of communication, and there is respect for cultural differences, freedom of speech is meaningless.

of others. Art at its best can grant us insight and perspective about the human condition—about how we learn to live and survive. We cannot use “freedom of expression” as an abstract excuse to justify the use of images created in a different era, an era when democratic rights were denied to people of color. We cannot use “artistic freedom” as license to impinge upon the rights of others. That would be a slander on the spirit of that right.

I am not advocating policy that would have prevented Griffith from making his film. Because the most important aspect is the debate that follows the controversies of a *Birth of a Nation* or a *Miss Saigon*. That debate has to explore the intricacies of the issues at hand. Because that is where we begin to flesh out the issues of a culturally equal society. What was lost in the *Miss Saigon* controversy was an opportunity to explore issues of artistic responsibility to community and greater society. What was lost was the opportunity to explore the relationship of art to society. In the case of *Miss Saigon*, the mainstream press basically belittled and ignored the issues that the Asian American community raised. The Asian American community bore the onus of having to educate and convince and enlighten. The role we (in the larger sense) as a responsible community should assume should be one of building unity and understanding, not building more walls.

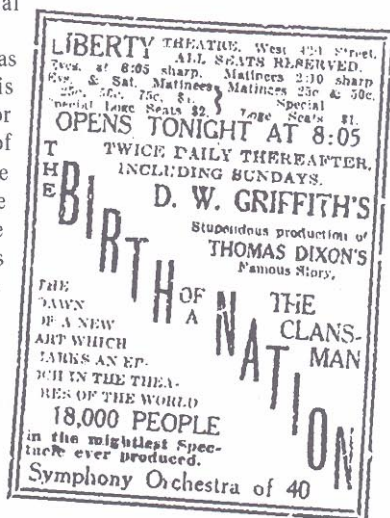
We must ask ourselves what role will the media arts play as we deal with issues of cultural equity and a history of racial hatred. We know at one end of the spectrum—the impact of *The Birth of a Nation* was the rejuvenation of the Ku Klux Klan in the '20s. The film brought to life the stereotypes previously found only in words and burned them into the minds of many Americans. Griffith for his part, denied being a racist. In fact, he is noted for having researched thoroughly the history of the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period before making the film. It was Griffith's artistic expression, but it also reflected Griffith's cultural perspective. It reflected the history books of his education and it continued the lineage of African American images created first by writers and then by filmmakers—images created during a time that the nation first debated and then went to war around the question of slavery and around the question of racial supremacy.

Access is as critical to a democratic society as having the right to freedom of speech. It is extremely critical to people of color because for so long, continuing through today, people of color are denied access to the media tools, the distribution and exhibition systems. While mainstream media hardly represents the breadth of even the “mainstream,” the voices of people of color have been and are completely excluded.

As media arts organizations and access centers, we have the charge to multiply the voices heard. We often hear communities of color talk about the importance of having our stories told, in our own voices, and having those stories heard. This is not a matter of affirmative action or quotas or numbers. It is a matter of shaping and re-shaping our culture. If the Webster's dictionary defines culture as the “sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and passed from one generation to another,” then the stories we choose to tell, the stories that we value and express our best understanding of the human condition in any time and place—these stories are part of the dynamic process that gives a culture its essence.

The stories that people of color have to offer run the gamut from those dealing with racism and the problems of our communities, to those that deal with family, personal and interpersonal relationships. The breadth of these stories will help us begin to learn about the cultures that exist within our culture. And, the more we can weave these stories into our existing culture, the more we can begin to have a sense of a truly multicultural and democratic society.

Julian Low is Executive Director of the National Alliance of Media Arts & Culture. Contact him at NAMAC, 1212 Broadway, Suite 816, Oakland, CA 94612. Phone: (510) 451-2717.



Access Makes a Difference

Rosebud started two years ago as a volunteer group trying to help film and videomakers get exposure for their work by having an annual competition and showing 20 nominated works. Filmmakers want an audience. Working in isolation, if they don't produce a major Hollywood film they can't get exposure. Public access cable channels like DCTV offer opportunities for struggling as well as professional filmmakers to get their work before the public.

Rosie Dempsey, Rosebud, an arts organization, Washington D.C.

Public access is incredibly important when comparing mass media television, American to European standards. European tradition typically offers in depth, non-commercial coverage. Public access TV is the only American option to countermand the mass media fluff and puff disinformation tradition coming from the major networks. I do not see the major networks coming in to the schools...to do in depth interviews of students, or of women's groups, or unemployed groups, or homeless people. Rather the networks show a fleeting glimpse of someone on a sidewalk, for example, merely to gain ratings, not to gain understanding over time, involving communication.

Marilu Correll Carter, Davis, CA

Through community TV, I can show and tell what's fun, important, and challenging in my world. Others can do the same and our messages need not be filtered through commercial interests or formats. The Alliance for Community Media enables us to connect with people beyond our immediate sphere and work together to solve problems that affect us all.

Toni Barrientos, Hillsboro, OR

Membership in the Alliance has put me in contact with people in education access all over America. There is always someone to talk to about my current concern, idea, or problem. Those in the organization are not only willing, but eager, to share information. It's exciting.

Dr. Alice French, Lubbock, TX

Utilizing the Media: The SouthWest Organizing Project

By Sofia Martínez

How progressive groups use the media is especially critical now as women's groups, people of color, church and community organizations, and gay and lesbian rights activists reach out to protest and challenge the status quo across the country. These challenges are raising public awareness of racist reporting, omission of coverage, and questioning who presents and controls the images and information. The SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), a community based group located in Albuquerque, New Mexico is a good example of how the various media can be utilized successfully to inform and educate and at the same time increase access.

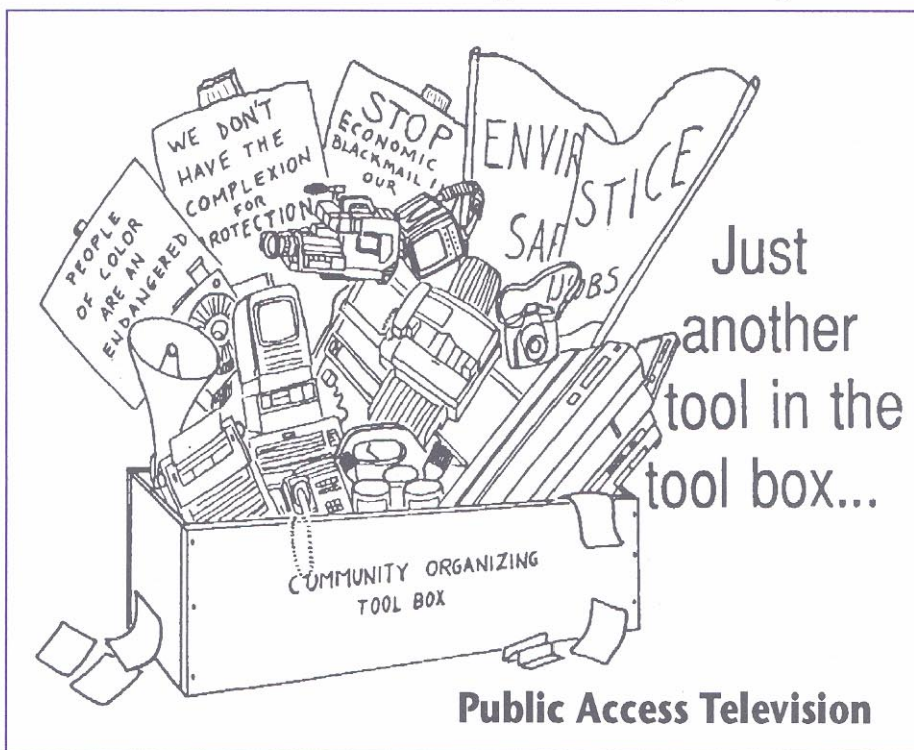
SWOP was founded over 10 years ago by current SWOP director Jeanne Gauna and Richard Moore, director of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. The mission of the organization is to empower the disenfranchised in the southwest to realize racial and gender equality and social and economic justice.

SWOP uses the concept of campaigns in its approach to organizing. Typically the organization at a local level surveys communities and identifies leaders who in collaboration with SWOP develop campaigns out of issues of primary concern in these communities. The organization has one of the most effective community environmental programs in the country. It is a lead organization in the struggle against environmental racism and the growing people of color environmental justice movement in the U.S. This movement is challenging EPA policies and disproportionate siting of dirty and polluting industry and hazardous waste dumps in people of color communities. SWOP also has a child and youth development project which provides alternative education and leadership development for youth through an arts-based program. The organization maintains an international philosophy by hosting and promoting international exchange and travel among its membership and youth.

SWOP has developed an effective communications outreach program which publishes an internal newsletter, a nationally distributed newsletter called "Voces Unidas", coloring books, a working paper series on environmental racism, and most recently it republished an updated and revised edition of *450 Years in Chicano History in Pictures* edited by Elizabeth Martínez. SWOP's work has quite successfully been featured locally, regionally and nationally in print, radio and television, both "mainstream" and public access. SWOP is committed to representing its own work rather than depending on the "media" to tell its stories. This is the result of the organization's exemplary use of the media and all communications mediums as well as of like-minded individuals who are excellent organizers. The idea of public access to media is not new to SWOP: one of our Board members served on the first Board of Directors of Quote...Unquote, Inc., and other SWOP members were part of the Chicano Media Center in Albuquerque.

SWOP has encouraged and facilitated video training for a majority of its membership and youth. Members have participated in, produced and directed public access programs on their work as well as informational videos on the organization which have been cablecast on the local public access channel. The group has also produced a variety of programming through the local university radio station.

In the last year, SWOP has started a new initiative: a collaborative effort between KUNM FM and Quote...Unquote, Inc./ Community Cable



SWOP has used community based media as a very useful tool for promoting environmental, economic and media self-defense.

Channel 27. The programs are produced by SWOP and coordinated with KUNM and CCC 27. They are typically live panel discussions with a call-in segment which are simulcast on radio and cable television. SWOP's first program, "The Persian Gulf Crisis: What's in it for US?" featured a discussion by people of color and segments of the program were used by Deep Dish TV in their series on the Persian Gulf war.

Other programs have included "Environment, Race and Class: The Poisoning of Communities of Color", and "500 Years of Chicano History." All of the programs have generated a great response, judging by calls to the programs both in favor and against the ideas presented and judging by the response to the organization in the weeks after the programs. SWOP's next collaborative project will be in conjunction with the Deep Dish series titled "Rock the Boat." The segment produced by SWOP is "The New Resistance: Southwestern Communities of Color Struggling for Environmental and Economic Justice."

SWOP has used community based media as a very useful tool for promoting environmental, economic and media self-defense. SWOP is always ready to defend its access to communication, and actively defends public access and community radio in the process. In the future, SWOP plans to assist the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice in setting up a program of "media empowerment" throughout the region.

This aggressive approach by SWOP in using the tools of media has made its work well known. The impact of using these tools has been the empowerment of our organization and our community. Public access can be an important part of community empowerment, making available the tools to create programming which can realistically relate information that is important, practical and readily available.

Sofia Martínez is President of the SouthWest Organizing Project Board of Directors, 211 10th St. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Phone: 505/247-8832.

Regional Organ Bank of Illinois Access Program Saves Lives

By Barbara Popovic

The Regional Organ Bank of Illinois (ROBI) uses community access television to achieve dramatic results: saving lives.

According to Jack Lynch, Hospital Community Development Specialist for ROBI, when it comes to organ donation the African American community "has long been underinformed, uninformed, and then blamed for not knowing. So we utilize programs such as cable access to promote and increase awareness."

Working through the Chicago Access Corporation's interactive HOTLINE 21 studio, Lynch produced his initial community access series in 1990. He was motivated by the awareness that the most difficult time to begin education about organ donation is when he is called to a hospital to interview the family of a potential donor. Through community access, Lynch saw the ability to "increase opportunities to speak to the African American community, increase our visibility, and raise awareness so that people can seek additional information."

Lynch said that two families gave consent to organ donation from a loved one as a result of watching the HOTLINE show. In one case, on a Saturday, Lynch walked into Cook County hospital to work with the family of a brain-dead gunshot victim. One of the family members recognized him from the show earlier that week and facilitated Lynch's work with the family, talking about what he had seen on TV, why it was something they should do, and why and how they could help someone else. The family gave ROBI consent for use of all the victim's transplantable organs.

During the first 13-week series, Lynch invited a donor family, people waiting for transplants, and transplant surgeons on the show to talk directly with viewers. Doctors discussed high blood pressure, cardiac and renal disease and prevention. Lynch said, "Our experts were not directors of the American Heart Association, but everyday doctors and clinicians from the community who see a ton of end stage organ failure."

According to Lynch, "Cable access has been a great vehicle for people to call in, to air their views and their concerns, and to work through their own fears and reservations." Throughout the series, the response of viewers was strong, with calls coming in constantly. He attributes the success of the show to several factors. "One thing about having the opportunity to be a member of the cable access family, is that historically, unfortunately, there are not enough visible African Americans doing anything. I think a lot of viewers might have just been flipping channels, came across another African American sitting there representing the community, and it made them sit up and take a look."

A number of feature stories have been done on Chicago broadcast stations about Jack Lynch and his work.... According to Lynch, "the only one (media) I have concrete results from is cable access."

Another key factor related to the live, interactive nature of HOTLINE, is the opportunity to be heard. Lynch recalls the viewer who said, "As a black man you should be ashamed promoting organ donation, because the organs only go to rich white folk." Lynch and the transplant surgeon joining him on the show explained to the viewer that nine out of 10 organs that are donated are donated by whites, and almost 50% or better of the people waiting for kidney transplants in Illinois are black. However, less than 5% of all organs that are donated nationally come from blacks. Says Lynch, "I want people to question and to doubt, and then I want them to have an opportunity, if they are willing to listen, to hear facts."

Interest in the HOTLINE series was high. Many of the health organizations that initially participated with ROBI on the show, have shown interest in becoming more directly involved. "I just can't say enough about it, says Lynch. "Other organizations and people that have seen us - the Black Nurses Association, the Cook County Physicians Association and the Black Pharmacists Association, all of which were interviewed by us on our series, are now making application to do their own programs. It has snowballed!"

ROBI makes frequent use of the media for education and outreach. A number of feature stories have been done on Chicago broadcast stations about Jack Lynch and his work. According to Lynch, "the only one (media) I have concrete results from is cable access."

Lynch plans to continue to use community access television to help further the mission of the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois. In recent testimony before the Chicago Cable Commission he said, "As a result of being more accessible, more viewed, and more discussed because of utilizing programs such as cable access 21, lives have been saved."

Contact Barbara Popovic at Chicago Access Corporation, 322 S. Green Street, Chicago, IL 60607. Phone: (312) 738-1400. For more information about the HOTLINE studio, contact Lisa Heller or Greg Boozell at CAC.

"Cable access has been a great vehicle for people to call in, to air their views and their concerns, and to work through their own fears and reservations."

-Jack Lynch, Hospital Community Development Specialist

Access Makes a Difference

DCTV has given our organization access to television which we couldn't have otherwise afforded. Our series, "Washington Health", has been well-received, cost effective and fun.

Dianne Bricker, Medical Society of Washington, D.C.

We must be able to speak with the public directly via the electronic media.

Amy I. Meyer RN, Executive Director, The Providers Association for AIDS Care, Columbus, Ohio

I produce a program for the United Nations Association of Southern Arizona. Public access is important to me because I believe that local citizens and groups need access to the video/cable systems serving their communities.

Dell Gay, Tucson

We, in cooperation with other local religious organizations, produced "Interface", an ecumenical talk show on ACTV Cable 21 in the Columbus, Ohio area for four years, logging nearly 120 separate half-hour programs. "Interface" provided a forum for a wide variety of religious topics and featured representatives from many different religious and non-religious organizations. The theme was "bringing religion and society into focus."

Kenneth J. Snow, Media Services Coordinator, Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

Project VITAL and Project RAISE Meet in Tucson at TCCC

Project VITAL (Video Induced Training and Learning) was created and launched by the Little Cities Foundation in 1985. The foundation is a not-for-profit organization which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities. Project VITAL has been implemented in many communities nationwide as a program which provides a special training curriculum to teach persons with developmental disabilities, such as mental retardation and Down's Syndrome, to operate the equipment of public access television centers.

The Tucson Community Cable Corporation (TCCC) was one of the access centers which implemented Project VITAL. TCCC staff members Maricela Martinez-Whitmore, Lisa Horner, and Larry Beiser were instructed on how to teach the project curriculum by Maggie Lee, Media Arts Coordinator of the Little Cities Foundation. The first classes were offered in the winter of 1991 for students affiliated with Project RAISE. TCCC members Rob Shoults and Robert Flanagan also worked on the project as teaching assistants – both have cerebral palsy and both received their video training from TCCC.

As a result of the Project VITAL program, TCCC received the 1991 Janice S. Armstrong Award from the Association of Retarded Citizens of Arizona. The award recognized TCCC's contributions in supporting people with disabilities.

Cindy Meier, Project RAISE Coordinator, answered questions and shared the following impressions about the Project VITAL experience:

What is Project RAISE?

Project RAISE is a program of Pima County Adult Education. The major purpose of Project RAISE is to provide basic education programs for adults with developmental disabilities – most of them are mentally retarded, autistic, or have cerebral palsy or seizure disorders. We teach reading, money management skills, creative arts, dance and speech, as well as the cable television class. In addition to our other projects, the cable television class gives our students more opportunities for self-expression.

How did you find out about access television?

Alan Dachman (from the Little Cities Foundation) came to Tucson and in conjunction with Tucson Community Cable Corporation offered a demonstration for staff and students. We were fascinated. About 18 months later, we met with Alan and Sam (Sam Berhend, Executive Director of TCCC) to figure out what to do here.

What were your goals for the access project?

We didn't have any concrete goals to start out, except that we wanted the students to create their own video, to totally create it themselves, to make it their show. Before we were approached by TCCC, it had never occurred to us to use television in our program.

What was the impact of the access project?

Using public access is the most exciting thing we've ever done. Everyone's level of enthusiasm went up. We had 25 students involved in this project.

The impact that I can see is tremendous. The students have gained tremendous confidence, they feel good about themselves. They have new skills. Learning how to participate in a "high-tech" atmosphere was very empowering. In addition to enthusiasm and confidence, we had fun. While working on the shows, I see a lot of laughter and joy. I think one of



the great accomplishments of this training and efforts of TCCC was the emphasis on fun – this was presented as a great way to use leisure time, not just as a way to produce a product.

I also notice a lot more communication happening now between people – more interaction between the students as a result of this endeavor.

What has been the impact of the programs?

Students and parents are thrilled, of course. We also received some calls from members of the public who had seen the programs, liked the project, wanted to get involved and offered to help.

Some of the programs were about disability – one was about what it's like to ride the city bus, another looked at how accessible the zoo is to wheelchairs.

Another program was about relationships, all kinds of relationships. The students just wanted to show what their lives are like....

Do you think Project RAISE will continue to be involved with access television?

Definitely. Our next step will be to try and integrate our students into other people's shows, not to have them "segregated" on just our own show.

Ultimately, the idea will be to have everybody working together, with our students participating in whatever programs they choose. One of the ideas is to do sort of one-on-one training with the other producers, to introduce them to what our students are able to do, able to provide.

What is the value of community access to you?

I am a strong proponent of free speech. It is very important for all of us to be able to say what we want to say and show what we want to show. In addition to that, watching TV encourages passivity. It is very important to be making TV instead of just watching it. After you've participated in making TV, you are able to be more critical, you can notice how it's made.

In closing, I just cannot over-emphasize the personal difference our access project has made in the lives of these individuals – they are able to express themselves, to express something that they've never seen on TV before, something about their own real lives.

Information for this article was provided by LaMonte Ward, TCCC, Pamela Portwood, Envision, and Cindy Meier, Project RAISE. Contact Cindy Meier at (602) 881-5520 and the Tucson Community Cable Corporation at (602) 624-9833.

**CONTACT
THE
NATIONAL
OFFICE**

6...increasing awareness
of Community Television
through educational programs
and participation in court cases
involving franchise enforcement
and constitutional questions
about access television. 9



An Invitation to Join the *Alliance for Communications Democracy*

Become an Alliance Subscriber for \$350/year and receive detailed reports on current court cases threatening access, pertinent historical case citations, and other Alliance activities.

- Voting membership open to non-profit access operations for an annual contribution of \$3,000.
- Non-voting memberships available to organizations and individuals at the following levels:

- Alliance Associate, \$2500 - copies of all briefs and reports.
- Alliance Supporter, \$500 - copies of all reports and enclosures.
- Alliance Subscriber, \$350 - copies of all reports.

Direct membership inquiries to Richard Turner, 'Ōlelo: the Corporation for Community Television, 960 Māpunapuna, 2nd floor, Honolulu, HI, 96819, or phone (808) 834-0007 ext.1714.

Voting Members: Chicago Access Corporation, Illinois • Montgomery Community Television, Inc., Virginia • Columbus Community Cable Access, Inc., Ohio • Staten Island Television, New York • Boston Community Access & Programming Foundation, Inc., Massachusetts • GRTV, Grand Rapids, Michigan • Tuscon Community Cable Corporation, Arizona • Ōlelo: The Corporation for Community TV, Hawaii.

Non-voting Members: Multnomah Cable Regulatory Commission, Oregon • Oakland County Cable Corporation, Michigan • Ann Arbor Community Access Television, Michigan • Capital Community TV, Oregon • Multnomah Community TV, Oregon • NFLCP Central States Region • NFLCP Far West Region.

**THE ALLIANCE FOR
COMMUNITY MEDIA**
COMMUNITY TELEVISION REVIEW
15 Ionia SW, Suite 201
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113



Printed on Recycled Paper

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit 918

CS Ind ADV EXP: 10/19/92
Tim Goodwin
7 Burr Oak NW
Grand Rapids MI 49505